

dividing off those *who* revolt against materialised objects of reverence and worship, from those to whom the materialisation gives no offence. Neither was Wycliffe blind to the use made of the theory of Transubstantiation by the priests, and still more by the friars, to secure the veneration and obedience of those to whom they ministered.¹ He declared that nothing was more horrible to him than the idea that every celebrating priest made the body of Christ;² the Mass was a false miracle invented for mundane purposes.³ It is now acknowledged that the power of the clergy is strongest with those peoples who believe in Transubstantiation. Even in the fourteenth century the Church recognised that her position depended on the doctrine.

Whether Wycliffe knew what a storm he was about to raise, it is impossible to say. At any rate the storm arose at once, and he never for an instant shrank from its fury. John of Gaunt hurried down in person to Oxford, and ordered him to be silent on the question.⁴ Such vigorous action shows not only what importance the Duke attached to his ally, but the alarm with which he regarded heresy about the Mass. The way was now divided before Wycliffe, and he had to make his choice. By a sacrifice of principle he would have become the bond-slave of a discredited political party, but he would have remained at Oxford safe from all annoyance by the Church, under the patronage and occasionally in the employment of the State; by doing the duty which lay before him without consideration of consequence, he sacrificed the Lancastrian alliance, he threw away the protection of the government, he put himself at the mercy of the Bishops, he was driven from Oxford ; he ceased to have an honoured position in high circles, to be spoken of with respect by great friends, and recognition by great enemies. The hopes and schemes of the last ten years vanished. By his refusal to obey the Duke he entered finally on the new life into which he had been gradually drifting for some time past, the life of the enthusiast who builds for the future and not for the present, with the arm of the spirit and not with the arm of the flesh. Such a

¹ *Opus Evan-geHeum*, i. 102.
15,16.

* *De Blasplu mi* & ^ 26.

* *De Etccharistid*,

* *Fasc. Z* ^ 114.